

A

DOCUMENTATION OF RARE BIRD SIGHTING

FOR

THE COLORADO FIELD ORNITHOLOGISTS' RECORDS

Species: Black-legged Kittiwake (*Rissa tridactyla*)

Dates: November 10, 1984 Time Bird Seen: 1545 to 1610
November 11, 1984 1015 to 1045

Locality: Cherry Creek Reservoir
Denver, CO

Optical equipment: Bushnell Spacemaster II 20x45 Zoom

Number of birds seen: 1 Sex: Unknown Plumage: 1st Winter

Light conditions: Good

Distance from bird: 20 - 1000 meters (estimated)

Birds overall behavior:

Bird appeared to be fishing, flying rapidly around the lake and often wheeling into the water from approximately 5 to 10 meters. It would then immediately take to the air again and continue its hunt.

Other observers:

November 10, 1984: Linda L. Blue
3145 Westcliff Dr. W.
Colorado Springs, CO 80906

November 11, 1984: William Maynard
929 Cheyenne Blvd.
Colorado Springs, CO 80906

Detailed Description:

A good sized gull, approximately as large as the Ring-billed Gulls flying nearby and much larger than the Bonaparte's Gulls also flying in the area. Its wing beats were much more rapid than the Ring-billed Gulls' and comparable to those of the Bonaparte's.

The most striking character of this bird was the bold "M" pattern across the top of the wings accented by the white triangles formed on the wings by this pattern. The "M" pattern

included the outer primaries and continued to the wrist, then turned down towards the tail crossing into the gray area of the median and greater wing coverts. This created the white triangles noted above with the trailing edge of the wing forming the base with the apex pointing towards the wrist. This triangle area included the inner primaries and the secondaries.

The diagnostic character was the dark thick cervical mark forming a collar across the back of the neck. This mark was visible from the side in flight but was restricted to the top half of the bird. There was a dark smudge behind the eye. The white tail contrasted with the gray back and was tipped with black. The bill appeared to be all black.

Calls:

No calls were heard.

Similar species elimination:

Immature Sabine's Gull lacks bold black mark on inner wing, and has an almost all dark top of head and neck.

Adult Sabine's Gull in winter plumage lacks bold black mark on inner wing and tail is not tipped with black.

Immature Red-legged Kittiwake lacks bold striping on wings and has less distinct, more ragged white triangle on wing. Lacks black terminal band on tail.

Juvenile Little Gull has dark crown and cervical mark which merges with dark back.

First winter Bonaparte's Gull has black mark across trailing edge of wings and lacks the cervical mark.

Prior experience with this and similar species:

First sighting of Black-legged Kittiwake.

This report was written from notes made during observation.

Name: David V. Blue

Mailing address: 3145 Westcliff Dr. W.
Colorado Springs, CO 80906

Signature: David V. Blue

APPENDIX II

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DOCUMENTATION OF RARE BIRD SIGHTINGS
FOR
THE COLORADO FIELD ORNITHOLOGISTS' RECORDSSpecies: Black-legged Kittiwake ; Rissa tridactyla
(Vernacular name) (Scientific name)

If you watch birds solely for your own enjoyment, a written description of your observations is unnecessary. But, if you have seen something unusual, and would like to share this with others, a written description is essential. Compilers of regional bird lists must insist that their records be scientifically sound; future bird students -- those studying occurrences 50 years from now -- must have a written record on which to depend. By providing the verifying written description, you are employing a basic rule of the scientific method.

We recognize that experienced field observers can provide important and reliable records, if supported by an adequate verifying description. Thus this request is an effort to perpetuate your record by obtaining concrete evidence which may be permanently preserved for examination by others in the future. This procedure is required for every extraordinary observation, irrespective of the observer.

Dates (s): 11/11/84 Time Bird Seen: ~ 10:30 Am to ~ 11:00 AMLocality: Cherry Creek Reservoir
Denver, Colorado
Nearest town, county and state:Optical equipment: Nikon 9x30 binoculars Bushnell Synchronizer II - 15x-45x scopeIf photographed, please enclose copy. Equipment used: Minolta SRT 201
Celestron 500 mm lens f.8Number of birds seen: 1 Sex: ? Plumage: 1st WinterLight conditions: goodDistance from bird, and how measured: flew as close as 50'

Describe the bird's overall behavior: After seeing B.L. Kittiwakes fly enough times they are easy to spot with their flying style, less than full wing beats and fast in comparison to the Ringed billed Gulls nearby. This bird was feeding off of the surface on flight and landing.

Describe the habitat in which you observed the bird: on occasion in the water for periods of less than 5 seconds

The gull was cruising the south, west, and NW sides of Cherry Creek Res. close to shore.

Other observers who independently identified this bird (Please list name and address):

David Blue Westcott Dr. Colorado Springs CO 80906

APPENDIX II Continued

Describe in great detail the bird which you saw. Emphasize particularly the field marks used to identify the bird, but include a complete description of the bird. Include size, overall shape, plumage and color pattern; details on shape or size of bill, wings, and tail. (Reference to its resemblance to field guide descriptions is not enough). Describe what you actually saw in the field.

Without trying to be a snob the bird clearly showed the dark blackish cervical collar & light head, black tipped tail, black bill, post ocular spot and the characteristic flight with short & fast wing beats. The feet were also black.

Describe the bird's calls or sounds, if heard; including method of delivery-- i.e., from perch, in flight, etc.:

No noticeable sounds heard

List similar species and how you eliminated them:

Sabine's Gull - juveniles & 1st winter have darker & scaly backs, doesn't show "W" upper wing pattern; has browner head, has striking white triangular patch on secondaries & inner primaries across upper wing.
 Red-legged Kittiwake - lacks the "W" pattern of 1st year Black-legged Kittiwake, has shorter bill, darker, more.
 Little Gull - much smaller in size, much darker mantle, 1st winter bird lacks cervical collar & has
 Ross's Gull - smaller, has wedge shaped tail, 1st winter lacks cervical collar, very different flight darker crown.
 Prior experience with this and similar species:
 have seen the Colorado Ross's Gull, 3 Juv. Sabine's Gulls this fall in October and I have seen numerous Black-legged Kittiwakes in Bruce William Sound, Alaska & a few B-L Kittiwakes in Kotzebue Sound this August.

This report was written from notes made during _____ after ☒ observation;
 from memory _____.

Name (print) : William R. Maynard

Mailing address: 926 Cheyenne Blvd, Colorado Springs, CO 80906

Signature: William R Maynard

Return Form To:

CFO Records Committee
 c/o Curator--Zoological Collections
 Denver Museum of Natural History
 City Park
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